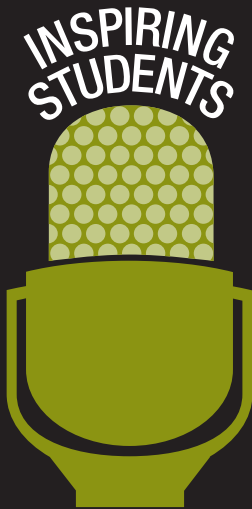


National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation present



# POETRY OUT LOUD

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## 2019 NATIONAL FINALS

**April 30–May 1**

Lisner Auditorium

The George Washington University  
Washington, DC

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the state and jurisdictional arts agencies of the United States. The Poetry Out Loud National Finals are administered by Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation.



Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) to learn more.



The **Poetry Foundation**, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative partnerships, prizes, and programs.



**Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation** develops partnerships and programs that reinforce artists' capacity to create and present work and advance access to and participation in the arts. The Foundation was created in 1979 and is a private non-profit organization that is closely allied with the region's state arts councils and the National Endowment for the Arts. It combines funding from state and federal resources with private support from corporations, foundations, and individuals to address needs in the arts from a regional, national, and international perspective.

The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will also be webcast live at [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov).

**WELCOME** to our nation's capital and the final competition of the 2019 Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation are pleased to join the state arts agencies in making this program available to high school students nationwide.

Since the inception of Poetry Out Loud in 2005, more than 3.8 million students and 60,000 teachers from 16,000 schools across the country have participated. Fifty-three students advance to the National Finals—one from every state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. We congratulate all our state champions on their successes and recognize the courage and hard work that brought them here today. To the family, friends, teachers, and state arts agency staff and partners who have emboldened and supported these students along their journey, we offer an enthusiastic round of applause—thank you.

Every audience member, whether with us in person, watching the live webcast, or following us at #POL19, will witness how a poem is transformed when taken off the page and spoken out loud. These students have explored the intricacies of poetry and brought their own experience to the interpretation and delivery. You will hear poems written centuries ago and others newly minted, and you may hear a poem recited more than once—consider what each unique perspective reveals.

In the words of U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith, "a poem, necessarily, sits at a register that's different from our usual conversational voices. You have to listen more actively to get to the heart of what's being said, what you as a reader or listener are being asked to feel or notice." We invite you to listen closely to these recitations, to enter the minds of others, and be a participant in the art of witness.

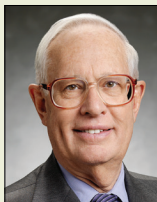
A warm welcome to all of our guests, and best of luck to our competitors.

Photo courtesy of NEA



**Mary Anne Carter**  
Acting Chairman  
National Endowment for the Arts

Photo courtesy of the Poetry Foundation



**Henry S. Bienen**  
President  
Poetry Foundation

April 30

## Semifinals Program

9:00 am      **Semifinal One**  
1:00 pm      **Semifinal Two**  
5:00 pm      **Semifinal Three**

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lauren Miller  
Stephen Young

### Hosts

Felicia Curry  
Anderson Wells  
Josephine Reed

### First Round

### Second Round

*Intermission*

### AWARDS PRESENTATION

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF REGIONAL FINALISTS

Top eight competitors in each semifinal will recite a third poem

### Third Round

### Announcement of National Finalists

Top three competitors in each semifinal will advance to the National Finals



## Hosts and Judges

### Semifinal One

#### HOST

**Felicia Curry** is an actor, singer, and performer in the DC area. She just finished playing Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act* at Virginia Music Theater and recently appeared in the world premiere of *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* by Heather McDonald at Signature Theatre. In New York City, she has performed at Joe's Pub (*We 3 Lizas*) and at the New York Musical Festival (*The Brontës* and *Petite Rouge*). Curry has performed regionally at the Gulfshore Playhouse, Virginia Repertory Theatre, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Round House Theatre, Rep Stage, Studio Theatre, MetroStage, Imagination Stage, Adventure Theatre, and Toby's Dinner Theatre. She is an artistic associate at Ford's Theatre and she will be co-hosting the Washington, DC Helen Hayes Awards, for the second time, with award-winning director and actor Rick Hammerly. She has been named one of 12 DC Stage Dynamos by the *Washington Post* and in 2018, she received a HH Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Play for *Lela & Co.* at Factory 449 and for Best Ensemble for *Ragtime* at Ford's Theatre. Curry is a Factory 449 company member and holds a BA in journalism, with a minor in the performing arts, from the University of Maryland, College Park.

#### JUDGES



Photo courtesy of Dan Brady

**Dan Brady** is the author of the poetry collections *Strange Children* (Publishing Genius, 2018) and *Subtexts* (forthcoming from Publishing Genius, 2020), as well as two chapbooks, *Cabin Fever / Fossil Record* (Flying Guillotine Press) and *Leroy Sequences* (Horse Less Press). Brady is the poetry editor of *Barrelhouse*, a magazine and small press based in Washington, DC. Previously, he served as the editor of *American Poets*, the journal of the Academy of American Poets, and worked in the Literature Division at

the National Endowment for the Arts, where he received a Distinguished Service Award for his work on the NEA Big Read.

Photo courtesy of Darrel Holmes



**Darrel Alejandro Holmes** is a researcher, poet, and playwright from Panama City and the former Canal Zone of Panama. He is the recipient of creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, Cave Canem, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and CantoMundo. His poetry appears in *Poetry* magazine, *American Poetry Review*, *Best American Experimental Writing*, *Callaloo*, and elsewhere in print and online. He is the recipient of the C.P. Cavafy Poetry Prize from Poetry International, and he was a finalist for the National Poetry Series. Holmes is an assistant professor of English in creative writing and playwriting at Medgar Evers College and he teaches at New York University.

Photo courtesy of Kristen Jackson



**Kristen Jackson** currently serves as connectivity director for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, DC. She earned her MA from University of Texas-Austin in performance as public practice and a BA in theater studies and English from Duke University. In 2016, Jackson was recognized as an exceptionally talented early-career leader of color by the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for professional theater, and was selected to participate in TCG's inaugural Rising Leaders of Color program.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Xu



Born in Shanghai, poet **Lynn Xu** earned a BA from the University of California-Berkeley and an MFA at Brown University. She is the author of *Debts & Lessons*, a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, and *June*, a chapbook. She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Fulbright Foundation. In 2008, her work was featured in *Best American Poetry* and in 2013, she was selected as a New American Poet at the Poetry Society of America. With her family, she divides her time between Marfa, Texas, and Chicago, Illinois, where she teaches at the University of Chicago.

## Semifinal Two

### HOST

**Anderson Wells** is an actor, singer, and teacher in the DC area. He has worked with theater education programs at Center Stage in Baltimore, Maryland; Studio Theatre in Washington, DC; and Treehouse for Creative Kids in Ashburn, Virginia. He has performed with many a cappella groups, including DC's Vox Pop and the Lobby. Wells holds a BFA in acting from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and continues to teach and train at Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory.

### JUDGES

Photo courtesy of Quique Aviles



**Quique Aviles** is a poet, performer, and teacher. He has been writing, performing, and leading community arts projects in Washington, DC for more than 35 years. A graduate of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Aviles co-founded the LatiNegro Theater Collective in 1985 and Sol & Soul in 1999. He has written and performed more than ten one-man shows dealing with issues of race, identity, and class throughout the U.S., Mexico, and El Salvador. He was the director of Paso Nuevo, GALA Hispanic Theatre's award-winning youth theater program, and is currently a faculty member with the Theatre Lab. His poetry and commentary have been featured on NPR's *Latino USA* and *This I Believe*, and in several anthologies.

Photo courtesy of Chelsea Iorlano



**Chelsea Iorlano** is Split This Rock's director of youth programs. At Split This Rock, she draws on her personal experience as a poet and professional experiences working with youth to provide high quality programs to young people in the DC metro area. She believes in the power of poetry to express and celebrate difference and build power to transform individuals and communities. With an academic

background in English and creative writing, Iorlano has worked in the nonprofit sector, including volunteer and program management at For Love of Children, and fundraising and development at Asian American LEAD.



Photo by Fid Thompson

**Gowri Koneswaran** is a Tamil-American writer, performing artist, teacher, and lawyer. Her advocacy has addressed animal welfare, environmental protection, the rights of prisoners and the criminally accused in the U.S., and justice and accountability in Sri Lanka. She is a fellow of the Asian-American literary organization Kundiman, poetry coordinator at the nonprofit arts organization BloomBars, and a former poetry events host at Busboys and Poets. She also previously served as a senior poetry editor at *Jaggery* and associate editor of *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. She has performed her poetry at Lincoln Center Out of Doors, the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Capital Fringe Festival, SpokenWord Paris, and universities in the U.S. and Canada.



Photo courtesy of Gavin Lawrence

**Gavin Lawrence** is an actor, playwright, and director. His work has been seen at theaters across the country, including Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth, Steppenwolf, the Goodman, and the Guthrie. He is recipient of the AUDELCO Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in the Off-Broadway production of *Pure Confidence*, the Fox TCG Resident Actor Fellowship with Baltimore Center Stage, and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Theatre Arts Department at Howard University. Lawrence recently became a member of the core acting company at American Players Theatre, making him the first African-American member of this distinguished ensemble of theater-makers.

## Semifinal Three

### HOST

**Josephine Reed** is the media producer for the Public Affairs office at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). She produces and hosts the NEA's weekly podcast, *Art Works*, a program that features interviews with artists and creative thinkers. Before coming to the NEA, Reed directed XM Satellite Radio's book and contemporary theater channel and hosted the program *Writers on Writing*. In partnership with the NEA, Reed also created the series *The Big Read on XM*. Passionate about language, she has interviewed writers of all genres throughout her career, including novelists, historians, playwrights, and poets.

### JUDGES



Photo courtesy of Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis

**Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis** is the curator of Asian Pacific American Studies for the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. He is also founding director of the Washington, DC-based arts nonprofit the Asian American Literary Review, and serves as co-editor-in-chief of its critically acclaimed literary journal. Along with Tarfia Faizullah and Timothy Yu, Davis guest-edited *Poetry* magazine's first-ever special issue on Asian-American poetry in 2017. From 2006 to 2017, he taught literature, film, and mixed-race studies for the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland. His fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction have appeared in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *Ploughshares*, *Gastronomica*, *Kenyon Review*, *Amerasia Journal*, *AGNI* online, and *Fiction International*, among others.



Photo courtesy of Jim Ferris



**Jim Ferris** is the author of *Slouching Towards Guantanamo* (2011), *Facts of Life* (2005), and *The Hospital Poems* (2004). Past president of the Society for Disability Studies and the Disabled & D/deaf Writers Caucus, he has received awards for performance and mathematics as well as poetry and creative nonfiction. Ferris is the poet laureate of Lucas County, Ohio. He earned a doctorate in performance studies and he currently holds the Ability Center Endowed Chair in Disability Studies at the University of Toledo.

Photo courtesy of Emmy Pérez



**Emmy Pérez** is the author of the poetry collections *With the River on Our Face* (University of Arizona Press) and *Solstice* (Swan Scythe Press). She is a past recipient of poetry fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, CantoMundo, and the New York Foundation for the Arts, among others. For the past decade, she has been a member of the Macondo Writers Workshop for socially engaged writers. Since 2018, she has served on the organizing committee for CantoMundo national literary organization. She is a professor of creative writing and the associate director of the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Photo courtesy of Seema Reza



**Seema Reza** is the author of *A Constellation of Half-Lives* (2019) and *When the World Breaks Open* (2016). Based outside of Washington, DC, she is the executive director of Community Building Art Works, a multi-

hospital arts program that encourages the use of the arts as a tool for narration, self-care, and socialization. Her writing has appeared in print and online in *Entropy*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *The Offing*, and *The Nervous Breakdown*, among others, and she has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She has performed across the country at universities, theaters, festivals, bookstores, conferences, and one fine mattress shop.

## Poetry Ourselves

Poetry Ourselves was launched in 2016 as a part of the National Endowment for the Arts' 50th anniversary celebration and is another way the Arts Endowment encourages student creativity. Each Poetry Out Loud state champion had the opportunity to submit an original work of poetry in one of two categories—written or spoken. Poet Kyle Dargan judged this year's submissions. Winning poems may be featured on [arts.gov](https://arts.gov) and [poetryoutloud.org](https://poetryoutloud.org). Winners and runners-up will be announced at the National Finals on May 1.

Photo by Marlene Hawthorne



**Kyle Dargan** is the author of the poetry collection *Anagnorisis*. His four previous collections, *Honest Engine*, *Logorrhea Dementia*, *Bouquet of Hungers*, and *The*

*Listening* were all published by the University of Georgia Press. For his work, he has received the Cave Canem Poetry Prize, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and grants from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. His books have also been finalists for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and the Eric Hoffer Awards Grand Prize. Dargan has partnered with the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities to produce poetry programming at the White House and Library of Congress. He has worked with and supports a number of youth writing organizations, such as 826DC, Writopia Lab, Young Writers Workshop, and the Dodge Poetry high schools program. He is currently an associate professor of literature and assistant director of creative writing at American University, as well as the founder and editor of *POST NO ILLS* magazine.

May 1

## National Finals Program

### WELCOME

Elizabeth Acevedo

### ROLL CALL OF STATE CHAMPIONS

### OPENING REMARKS AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POETRY OURSELVES WINNERS

Mary Anne Carter, Acting Chairman  
National Endowment for the Arts

## First Round

### REMARKS

Henry Bienen, President  
Poetry Foundation

## Second Round

### AWARDING OF MEDALS

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THREE FINALISTS

## Final Round

### REMARKS

Pam Breaux, President and CEO  
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

### PERFORMANCE

Madisen Ward and the Mama Bear

## Announcement of Poetry Out Loud National Champion



## Host and Judges

### HOST

National Poetry Slam Champion **Elizabeth Acevedo** received the 2018 National Book Award for her *New York Times* bestselling novel, *The Poet X*. She is also the winner of the *Boston Globe* Hornbook Award Prize, the Printz Award, the Pure Belpre Award, and the Walter Award, amongst many others. Acevedo holds a BA in performing arts from the George Washington University and an MFA in creative writing from the University of Maryland. She resides in Washington, DC with her husband.

### JUDGES

Photo by John Lucas



**Jericho Brown** is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award and fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Brown's first book, *Please* (2008), won the American Book Award. His second book, *The New Testament* (2014), won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was named one of the best of the year by *Library Journal*, *Coldfront*, and the Academy of American Poets. He is also the author of the collection *The Tradition* (2019). His poems have appeared in the *The Nation*, *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *New Republic*, *Time*, and several volumes of *The Best American Poetry* anthologies. He is an associate professor and the director of the creative writing program at Emory University in Atlanta.

Photo courtesy of Teri Ellen Cross Davis



**Teri Ellen Cross Davis** is a Cave Canem fellow and attended the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and Hedgebrook. She is on the advisory committee for the biennial Split This Rock! Festival and is a member of the Black Ladies Brunch Collective. Her work can be read in many anthologies and journals, including *The Golden Shovel Anthology: New*



*Poems Honoring Gwendolyn Brooks; The BreakBeat Poets 2: Black Girl Magic; Harvard Review; Tin House; Poetry Ireland; and Little Patuxent Review.* Davis' first poetry collection, *Haint* (Gival Press, 2016), won the 2017 Ohioana Poetry Book Award. She coordinates the O.B. Hardison Poetry Series at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Photo courtesy of Mary Rand Hess



**Mary Rand Hess** is a poet, screenwriter, mixed-media artist, and *New York Times*-bestselling author. Her award-winning books include *Swing* (Blink YA, 2018), *Solo* (Blink YA, 2017), and *Animal Ark: Celebrating Our Wild World in Poetry and Pictures* (National Geographic Children's Books, 2017), all co-authored with Newbery Medalist Kwame Alexander. She has had a deep and abiding love for poetry ever since her mother gave her a copy of *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson when she was a young child. Hess is currently at work on a novel in verse and a few screenplays and has two picture books releasing in 2019.

Photo by Daniel Schaefer



**Hieu Minh Nguyen** is the author of *This Way to the Sugar* (Write Bloody Press, 2014) and *Not Here* (Coffee House Press, 2018). In 2018, Nguyen was awarded the Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. He is also a 2018 McKnight Writing Fellow, a Kundiman Fellow, a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellow, and a poetry editor for *Muzzle* magazine. His work has also appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry* magazine, *New York Times*, *Best American Poetry*, the Academy of American Poets, *BuzzFeed*, and elsewhere. He lives in Minneapolis and attends the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

Photo by Maria Ventura



**Randy Reinholz**, an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is founder and producing artistic director of Native Voices at the Autry, the nation's only equity theater company dedicated exclusively to the development and production of new plays by Native American, First Nations, and Alaska Native playwrights. He is an accomplished producer, director, actor, and playwright. Reinholz has produced more than 40 scripts and directed more than 60 plays in the United States, Australia, England, and Canada. He is a tenured professor at San Diego State University, where he served as head of acting from 1997–2007; director of the School of Theatre, Television, and Film from 2007–2012; and director of community engagement and innovation for the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts from 2012–2015.



# POETRY OUT LOUD

# 2019

## ALABAMA

**Garrett Whalen**

Baker High School

## ALASKA

**Honor J. Mealey**

North Pole High School

## ARIZONA

**Edgardo Andres Aguilar**

Desert View High School

## ARKANSAS

**Daevion Jones**

Malvern High School

## CALIFORNIA

**Lily Nichole Bogas**

Tamalpais High School

## COLORADO

**Jesca Gilbert**

Valor Christian High School

## CONNECTICUT

**Evan Reynolds**

Lewis S. Mills High School

## DELAWARE

**Chelsea M. Anokye-Agyei**

Paul M. Hodgson Vocational  
Technical High School

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Rosalie Ngatchou**

District of Columbia International  
School

## FLORIDA

**Zhaedyn Hodge Sigars**

Howard W. Blake High School

## GEORGIA

**Alejandro J. Campo**

Flowery Branch High School

## HAWAII

**Maggie Odom**

Le Jardin Academy

## IDAHO

**Maria M. Palmer**

Classical Christian Academy

## ILLINOIS

**Scottlynn Ernestine  
Ballard**

Edwardsville High School

## INDIANA

**Madalyn Pedigo**

West Washington Junior-Senior  
High School

## IOWA

**Foster Johnson**

Bishop Heelan Catholic High School

## KANSAS

**Khadija Ceesay**

Olathe South High School

## KENTUCKY

**Mary Kate Godfrey**

Elizabethtown High School

## LOUISIANA

**Gianina Aminata J.  
Ndiaye**

Benjamin Franklin High School

## MAINE

**João Rodrigues Victor**

Lewiston High School

## MARYLAND

**Grace Amelia Knor**

Tuscarora High School

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Rose E. Hansen**

Norwell High School

## MICHIGAN

**Tajah-Rayne Davise**

Calumet High School

## MINNESOTA

**Isabella Callery**

Arcadia Charter School

## MISSISSIPPI

**Taylor Mills**

Northwest Rankin High School

## MISSOURI

**Kate Brown**

Stockton High School

# STATE CHAMPIONS

These are the 2019  
Poetry Out Loud State Champions.  
Congratulations to all!

## MONTANA

**Sophie Barth**  
Butte High School

## NEBRASKA

**Maggie Harris**  
Thayer Central Community Schools

## NEVADA

**Vanessa M. Aponte**  
Legacy High School

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Rachel E. Budd**  
Bow High School

## NEW JERSEY

**Joseph Kim Sexton**  
Dr. Ronald E. McNair Academic  
High School

## NEW MEXICO

**Neil Katzman**  
Bosque School

## NEW YORK

**Chika Brown**  
Syosset High School

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Lillian Everett Hawkins**  
New Hanover High School

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Emily Gilsrud**  
Wahpeton Senior High School

## OHIO

**Anna Mary Kahle**  
Lima Central Catholic High School

## OKLAHOMA

**Keayla Anderson**  
Lawton High School

## OREGON

**Belise Nishimwe**  
St. Mary's Academy

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Jordan Marie Lewis**  
Hershey High School

## PUERTO RICO

**Felipe Albors Riera**  
Saint John's School

## RHODE ISLAND

**Haley Long**  
Classical High School

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Brynne Elizabeth  
Hardman**  
The Academy for the Arts,  
Science, and Technology

## SOUTH DAKOTA

**Gage Gramlick**  
Lincoln High School

## TENNESSEE

**Kendall Grimes**  
Battle Ground Academy

## TEXAS

**Ariel-Lynn Warren**  
Lewisville High School

## U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

**Mahlana Graham**  
St. Croix Seventh-day Adventist  
School

## UTAH

**Lucy Kay Quinn**  
North Sanpete High School

## VERMONT

**Vera Escaja-Heiss**  
South Burlington High School

## VIRGINIA

**Katherine Nguyen**  
Colonial Forge High School

## WASHINGTON

**Madeline Renee Luther**  
Okanogan High School

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Brett Napier**  
Greenbrier East High School

## WISCONSIN

**Daeja L. Loew**  
Altoona High School

## WYOMING

**Lauren Haiar**  
Sundance Secondary School

## DELAWARE

**Chelsea M. Anokye-Agyei****"Ah! Why, Because the Dazzling Sun"** by Emily Brontë**"The Albatross"** by Kate Bass

## OHIO

**Anna Mary Kahle****"Enough"** by Suzanne Buffam**"Now I Pray"** by Kathy Engel

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Brynne Elizabeth Hardman****"To have without holding"** by Marge Piercy**"Insomnia"** by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

## VIRGINIA

**Katherine Nguyen****"Mighty Pawns"** by Major Jackson**"Writing"** by Howard Nemerov

## NEW JERSEY

**Joseph Kim Sexton****"Sonnets from the Portuguese 43: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"** by Elizabeth Barrett Browning**"The Universe as Primal Scream"** by Tracy K. Smith

## RHODE ISLAND

**Haley Long****"The New Colossus"** by Emma Lazarus**"El Olvido"** by Judith Ortiz Cofer

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Rosalie Ngatchou****"The Poem You've Been Waiting For"** by Tarfia Faizullah**"'Hope' is the thing with feathers - (314)"** by Emily Dickinson

## VERMONT

**Vera Escaja-Heiss****"Harina de Castilla"** by Sandra M. Castillo**"To Solitude"** by Alice Cary

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Jordan Marie Lewis****"I Sit and Sew"** by Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson**"Revenge"** by Letitia Elizabeth Landon

MARYLAND	
Grace Amelia Knor	<p><b>"Caged Bird"</b> by Maya Angelou</p> <p><b>"Refusing Silence"</b> by Tess Gallagher</p>
NEW YORK	
Chika Brown	<p><b>"Pastoral Dialogue"</b> by Anne Killigrew</p> <p><b>"Requiem"</b> by Camille T. Dungy</p>
NORTH CAROLINA	
Lillian Everett Hawkins	<p><b>"Sonnets from the Portuguese 43: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"</b> by Elizabeth Barrett Browning</p> <p><b>"What Women Are Made Of"</b> by Bianca Lynne Spriggs</p>
MASSACHUSETTS	
Rose E. Hansen	<p><b>"Art vs. Trade"</b> by James Weldon Johnson</p> <p><b>"Undivided attention"</b> by Taylor Mali</p>
MAINE	
João Rodrigues Victor	<p><b>"Bright Copper Kettles"</b> by Vijay Seshadri</p> <p><b>"A History Without Suffering"</b> by E. A. Markham</p>
NEW HAMPSHIRE	
Rachel E. Budd	<p><b>"And Soul"</b> by Eavan Boland</p> <p><b>"Monet Refuses the Operation"</b> by Lisel Mueller</p>
CONNECTICUT	
Evan Reynolds	<p><b>"I Have a Time Machine"</b> by Brenda Shaughnessy</p> <p><b>"I Go Back to May 1937"</b> by Sharon Olds</p>
WEST VIRGINIA	
Brett Napier	<p><b>"Candles"</b> by Carl Dennis</p> <p><b>"My Brother the Artist, at Seven"</b> by Philip Levine</p>
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS	
Mahlana Graham	<p><b>"Black Boys Play the Classics"</b> by Toi Derricotte</p> <p><b>"Her Head"</b> by Joan Murray</p>

## FLORIDA

**Zhaedyn Hodge Sigars****"Discrimination"** by Kenneth Rexroth**"The Song of the Smoke"** by W. E. B. Du Bois

## WISCONSIN

**Daeja L. Loew****"Kin"** by Maya Angelou**"Testimonial"** by Rita Dove

## PUERTO RICO

**Felipe Albors Riera****"Here Is an Ear Hear"** by Victor Hernández Cruz**"Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments"** by William Shakespeare

## LOUISIANA

**Gianina Aminata J. Ndiaye****"The Golden Shovel"** by Terrance Hayes**"I Am Learning to Abandon the World"** by Linda Pastan

## TENNESSEE

**Kendall Grimes****"I Go Back to May 1937"** by Sharon Olds**"Worth"** by Marilyn Nelson

## MICHIGAN

**Tajah-Rayne Davise****"I Have a Time Machine"** by Brenda Shaughnessy**"Quite Frankly"** by Mark Halliday

## IOWA

**Foster Johnson****"The Moonlight"** by Noah Buchholz**"Let Me Tell You What a Poem Brings"** by Juan Felipe Herrera

## KENTUCKY

**Mary Kate Godfrey****"Megan Married Herself"** by Caroline Bird**"I Go Back to May 1937"** by Sharon Olds

## NEBRASKA

**Maggie Harris****"Bleeding Heart"** by Carmen Giménez-Smith**"Adam's Curse"** by William Butler Yeats



GEORGIA	
Alejandro J. Campo	<p><b>"Undivided attention"</b> by Taylor Mali</p> <p><b>"Dover Beach"</b> by Matthew Arnold</p>
MISSISSIPPI	
Taylor Mills	<p><b>"I Have a Time Machine"</b> by Brenda Shaughnessy</p> <p><b>"I Find no Peace"</b> by Sir Thomas Wyatt</p>
MISSOURI	
Kate Brown	<p><b>"I Have a Time Machine"</b> by Brenda Shaughnessy</p> <p><b>"Dover Beach"</b> by Matthew Arnold</p>
ILLINOIS	
Scottlynn Ernestine Ballard	<p><b>"Worth"</b> by Marilyn Nelson</p> <p><b>"Self-Help"</b> by Michael Ryan</p>
OKLAHOMA	
Keayla Anderson	<p><b>"Perhaps the World Ends Here"</b> by Joy Harjo</p> <p><b>"What Women Are Made Of"</b> by Bianca Lynne Spriggs</p>
ARKANSAS	
Daevion Jones	<p><b>"Four Glimpses of Night"</b> by Frank Marshall Davis</p> <p><b>"Truth"</b> by Gwendolyn Brooks</p>
INDIANA	
Madalyn Pedigo	<p><b>"Momma Said"</b> by Calvin Forbes</p> <p><b>"What Women Are Made Of"</b> by Bianca Lynn Spriggs</p>
ALABAMA	
Garrett Whalen	<p><b>"Symptoms of Prophecy"</b> by Camille Rankine</p> <p><b>"Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"</b> by William Shakespeare</p>
KANSAS	
Khadija Ceessay	<p><b>"Bleeding Heart"</b> by Carmen Giménez Smith</p> <p><b>"Epitaph"</b> by Katherine Philips</p>

## UTAH

Lucy Kay Quinn

**"Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent"** by John Milton**"Bleeding Heart"** by Carmen Giménez-Smith

## ARIZONA

Edgardo Andres Aguilar

**"It would be neat if with the New Year"** by Jimmy Santiago Baca**"Nude Descending a Staircase"** by X. J. Kennedy

## MONTANA

Sophie Barth

**"Larkinesque"** by Michael Ryan**"Songs for the People"** by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

## ALASKA

Honor J. Mealey

**"August 12 in the Nebraska Sand Hills Watching the Perseids Meteor Shower"** by Twyla Hansen**"I Go Back to May 1937"** by Sharon Olds

## WASHINGTON

Madeline Renee Luther

**"On Quitting"** by Edgar Albert Guest**"All This and More"** by Mary Karr

## NORTH DAKOTA

Emily Gilsrud

**"Megan Married Herself"** by Caroline Bird**"Quite Frankly"** by Mark Halliday

## TEXAS

Ariel-Lynn Warren

**"Blade, Unplugged"** by Tim Seibles**"A Celebration of Charis: I. His Excuse for Loving"** by Ben Jonson

## HAWAII

Maggie Odom

**"The New Colossus"** by Emma Lazarus**"Movement Song"** by Audre Lorde

## NEW MEXICO

Neil Katzman

**"Zacuanpapalotls"** by Brenda Cárdenas**"Life in a Love"** by Robert Browning

COLORADO		
Jesca Gilbert	"Violins" by Rowan Ricardo Phillips	
	"I, Too" by Langston Hughes	
MINNESOTA		
Isabella Callery	"Perhaps the World Ends Here" by Joy Harjo	
	"Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation" by Natalie Diaz	
IDAHO		
Maria M. Palmer	"Adam's Curse" by William Butler Yeats	
	"Oranges" by Roisin Kelly	
WYOMING		
Lauren Haiar	"Thoughtless Cruelty" by Charles Lamb	
	"Monet Refuses the Operation" by Lisel Mueller	
NEVADA		
Vanessa M. Aponte	"The Enigma" by Anne Stevenson	
	"The Lost Land" by Eavan Boland	
SOUTH DAKOTA		
Gage Gramlick	"The Strength of Fields" by James L. Dickey	
	"Onions" by William Matthews	
OREGON		
Belise Nishimwe	"Worth" by Marilyn Nelson	
	"Love's Philosophy" by Percy Bysshe Shelley	
CALIFORNIA		
Lily Nichole Bogas	"Megan Married Herself" by Caroline Bird	
	"Shall earth no more inspire thee" by Emily Brontë	

# Production and Guests

## DIRECTOR

**Michael Baron** is the producing artistic director of Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and has directed over 85 productions at theaters across the country. Most recently at Lyric, he directed *Bright Star*, *Fun Home*, *Disney's When You Wish, Dreamgirls*, *Assassins*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Big Fish*, *Oklahoma!*, *Les Misérables*, *Big River*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ragtime*, and *Oliver!* Baron's other directing highlights include *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Zach Theatre, the current production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre, and the 2016 Helen Hayes-nominated production of *James and the Giant Peach* at Adventure Theatre. He earned his MFA in directing from Trinity Repertory and a BA in theater from Wake Forest University.

## DJ

There are too many records in the world to stick to one style and DJ Stylus **Rhyme Anderson** embraces that in his party-rocking philosophy. The Vibe Conductor has always sought to add more dimensions to his areas of mastery, from a foundational role in Washington, DC's U Street hip-hop scene of the 1990s to releasing original and remixed international music with Sol Power Sound today. From bringing flavor to the world of fine arts by collaborating with the National Symphony Orchestra and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to curating overlooked funk, disco, and R&B gems of the 1980s with his Axel F Party crew, his extensive multigenre fluency creates musical narratives that are nuanced, compelling, ambitious, and far-ranging.

## ASL INTERPRETERS

### SEMIFINALS

Round One: **Jessica Gabrian** and **Cheryl Ringel**

Round Two: **Jessica Gabrian** and **Cheryl Ringel**

Round Three: **Jessica Gabrian** and **Mia Engle**

### FINALS

**Jessica Gabrian** and **Cheryl Ringel**

## MUSICAL GUEST

### Madisen Ward and the Mama Bear

In just a few short years, the duo of Ruth and Madisen went from playing in their Independence, Missouri, kitchen and small coffee houses to opening for various artists including Sufjan Stevens and B. B. King and joining festivals like Bonnaroo—and making an appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman*. The rootsy vitality of their debut LP, *Skelton Crew*, opened doors, but what truly makes the twosome stand out in an oversaturated world is how—whether performing in a tiny café or an auditorium stage—their stark, emotional intimacy never changes an inch. Every venue is still a coffee house, every last person in the audience a soul to connect with. Because that's what the music of Madisen Ward and the Mama Bear is all about: connection. Linking person to person, history to history, one to another. Emotion to emotion.

Madisen Ward and the Mama Bear's *Skeleton Crew* proved to be one of 2015's critical surprises: stark and intimate, the songs moved beyond traditional Americana to something that blurred the boundaries of folk, soul, gospel, and vintage rock. From an under-the-radar act that thrived on word of mouth around Kansas City, they soon became the purveyors of one of modern folk's most unique points of view. Reliant on the powerful dynamic of mother and son Madisen and Ruth's moving vocals, haunting melodies and poignant lyrics, songs like "Silent Movies" managed to be at one simple and acoustic yet sonically lush. But Madisen and Ruth are also not ones to stay stagnant, and "Childhood Goodbye," their new single from their forthcoming EP, shows how much they've grown: produced by Nathan Chapman, it embraces a more expansive orchestration, anchored by a rich drumbeat—it might sound different, but one listen will prove that the progression only heightens their emotional power.

Poetry Out Loud is managed at the state level by

Alabama State Council on the Arts	Illinois Arts Council Agency	New Jersey State Council on the Arts	Utah Division of Arts & Museums
Alaska State Council on the Arts	Indiana Arts Commission	New Mexico Arts	Vermont Arts Council
Arizona Commission on the Arts	Iowa Arts Council	New York State Council on the Arts	Virgin Islands Council on the Arts
Arkansas Arts Council	Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission	North Carolina Arts Council	Virginia Commission for the Arts
California Arts Council	Kentucky Arts Council	North Dakota Council on the Arts	Washington State Arts Commission: Arts WA
Colorado Creative Industries	Louisiana Division of the Arts	Ohio Arts Council	West Virginia Division of Culture and History
Connecticut Office of the Arts	Maine Arts Commission	Oklahoma Arts Council	Wisconsin Arts Board
Delaware Division of the Arts	Maryland State Arts Council	Oregon Arts Commission	Wyoming Arts Council
DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities	Massachusetts Cultural Council	Pennsylvania Council on the Arts	<i>and many incredible partners</i>
Florida Division of Cultural Affairs	Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs	Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña	
Georgia Council for the Arts	Minnesota State Arts Board	Rhode Island State Council on the Arts	The National Finals are the result of the remarkable efforts of Karen Newell and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Peggy Dahlquist, Michael Baron, DJ Rhome Anderson, guest hosts and judges, and staff at the National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation.
Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts	Mississippi Arts Commission	South Carolina Arts Commission	
Idaho Commission on the Arts	Missouri Arts Council	South Dakota Arts Council	
	Montana Arts Council	Tennessee Arts Commission	
	Nebraska Arts Council	Texas Commission on the Arts	
	Nevada Arts Council		
	New Hampshire State Council on the Arts		

Prizes

NATIONAL FINALS

1ST PLACE  
\$20,000 award

2ND PLACE  
\$10,000 award

3RD PLACE  
\$5,000 award

4TH-9TH PLACES  
\$1,000 award

The schools of the top nine finalists will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials.

The fourth-place student in each semifinal competition will receive an honorable mention award of \$1,000, with \$500 to their school library for the purchase of poetry materials.

STATE FINALS

More than \$50,000 in cash and school stipends were awarded at state final competitions.

*The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded in Poetry Out Loud.*

*Awards will be made in the form of lump sum cash payouts, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families.*



**"Poetry Out Loud really does change your life. It really does have that power. For me, it changed my identity, made me see myself differently [and realize] I'm smart, I'm intelligent, I can do this."**

— Janae Claxton, 2018 Poetry Out Loud National Champion

[www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org)

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